

## **Jungian Individuation in Red Dead Redemption 2: Archetypal Analysis of Arthur Morgan's Moral Transformation**

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### **ABSTRACT**

This study analyzes *Red Dead Redemption 2* as a modern literary work by examining archetypes and symbolic themes in one of its most emotionally impactful scenes, commonly referred to by players as the "I'm Afraid" moment. Using Carl Jung's theories of archetypes and the process of individuation, the study examines two different versions of this crucial scenario: one with Sister Calderon and the other with Reverend Swanson, both of which demonstrate the main character's moral awakening. This paper uses data from a survey the researcher conducted previously to identify how players experienced the scene and what symbolic elements made it powerful. The study then explores how *Red Dead Redemption 2*, through its integration of narrative choice, moral consequence, and symbolic storytelling, expands the boundaries of modern literature. Unlike traditional forms, the game enables players to participate directly in the protagonist's emotional and philosophical development, demonstrating how interactivity can heighten literary engagement. By combining narrative depth with player agency, *Red Dead Redemption 2* is positioned not merely as a game, but as a compelling example of contemporary literary experience that invites active moral and psychological participation.

**Keywords:** Individuation, Jungian Archetype, Modern Literature, Moral Development

### **INTRODUCTION**

Literature, from ancient epics to modern novels, has always been an important medium for comprehending human existence. It has consistently provided readers with space to contemplate complex themes such as morality, self-identity, and personal growth. *Crime and Punishment* by Fyodor Dostoevsky and *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* by Friedrich Nietzsche exemplify this tradition. These works focus on individuals experiencing profound internal struggles, prompting readers to reflect on their own moral choices, life attitudes, and emotional journeys (Khan, 2014). Literature becomes more than stories when it engages with such narratives; it becomes a mirror for self-examination.

Literature transforms in form and purpose as civilization advances. Contemporary literature is not confined to printed pages or static words. It has expanded to embrace diverse media forms, including film, theater, and increasingly, video games. These modern platforms offer audiences new ways to engage with narratives that are typically more immersive and interactive than traditional formats. This evolution is reflected in character development approaches. Forster's distinction between flat and round characters (Forster, 1927) demonstrates the complexity of writing fictional individuals. Round characters exhibit depth, growth, and unpredictable behavior, which are now common in contemporary digital narratives, whereas flat characters remain rigid and fulfill set purposes. According to Zwieter (2012), video games constitute an important part of this transformation because they allow

players to witness or even influence character arcs in real time. This shift marks a significant point in literary history, where stories are no longer merely read or observed, but actively experienced.

Video games have become vehicles for conveying intricate narratives and exploring psychological depth previously exclusive to books and films. *Red Dead Redemption 2* stands as one of the most prominent examples. This open-world game with substantial narrative content transports players to the final days of the American frontier. Set in a meticulously realized historical period with photorealistic graphics, the game also engages players emotionally and intellectually with themes of morality, redemption, identity, and mortality. These are not merely narrative components; they are integrated into gameplay, allowing players to shape the main character's trajectory through decisions. Released by Rockstar Games in 2018, *Red Dead Redemption 2* has become a milestone game and one of the most commercially successful video games of all time, ranking as the sixth highest-selling game with over 70 million copies sold (Take-Two Interactive, 2025). This achievement is remarkable for a story-driven game. This represents a significant industry shift: a narrative-focused game now occupies the top-ten sales list, typically dominated by games prioritizing gameplay over story. *Red Dead Redemption 2* distinguishes itself from other popular games like *Tetris* and *Minecraft*, recognized for simple mechanics and open-ended play, through its dramatic storytelling and emotional depth. This distinction is pronounced in a market where most best-selling games follow genre formulas emphasizing competitive or sandbox experiences, such as *PUBG* with survival mechanics or *Grand Theft Auto V* centered on open-world chaos and player freedom.

The intricate gameplay systems in *Red Dead Redemption 2* constitute one of its most distinctive features. These systems enable players to influence Arthur Morgan's morality, conduct, and psychological evolution throughout the narrative. This is not superficial; it is integrated into nearly every interaction and moment. Arthur's honor level, which can be low or high, changes based on player choices. These changes directly affect narrative progression. Players determine whether Arthur becomes a moral individual seeking redemption or a ruthless criminal through their interactions with the world and its inhabitants. The complexity of this system distinguishes *Red Dead Redemption 2* from many other games. It avoids simplistic good versus evil binaries, instead creating a nuanced, dynamic environment where even minor choices produce significant consequences. For instance, Arthur's interactions with non-playable characters (NPCs) vary according to player moral choices. If Arthur has been aggressive or lawless, NPCs may respond with suspicion, sarcasm, or fear, altering their behavior when he approaches. This continuous feedback loop amplifies the significance of player choices by ensuring that actions produce consequences within the game environment. Moral decisions affect not only the narrative but the entire player experience (Rockstar Games, 2018).

To fully comprehend the game's impact on players, psychological theories underlying *Red Dead Redemption 2*'s narrative and character development must be examined. Carl Jung's theories of archetypes and symbols provide valuable analytical frameworks because they significantly influence game design and player interaction. Peterson (2015) explains that Jungian psychology posits archetypes as universal, recurring symbols and behavioral patterns spanning cultures and ages, representing fundamental aspects of human experience. These archetypes facilitate understanding of human growth and transformation, particularly psychological processes shaping identity and development (Jung, 1970).

Recent scholarship has increasingly recognized video games as legitimate sites for literary and psychological analysis. Dino (2024) argues that the evolution of storylines in video games represents a significant development in narrative forms, with games now capable of delivering complex character arcs comparable to traditional literature. Wright and Denisova (2024) examined player experiences with moral decision-making mechanics in video games, finding that such systems create meaningful ethical engagement that extends beyond gameplay into real-world moral reflection. Their study demonstrates that players experience genuine moral dilemmas when confronted with difficult choices, suggesting that video games can facilitate moral development in ways similar to literature. Furthermore, Squire (2014) conceptualizes video game literacy as a specialized form of expertise, arguing that understanding and interpreting video game narratives requires sophisticated analytical skills comparable to literary criticism. These recent studies establish a foundation for understanding video games as legitimate objects of literary and psychological inquiry.

This study employs Carl Jung's theory of individuation as its primary conceptual framework, underpinned by his concepts of archetypes and symbolic imagery. Individuation denotes an individual's psychological journey toward achieving wholeness, wherein various facets of the self are confronted, integrated, and reconciled. In literature, this process frequently emerges through characters experiencing personal development via internal and external conflicts. *Red Dead Redemption 2* presents a distinctive, interactive portrayal of this journey through Arthur Morgan. Arthur's transformation is contingent upon player choices, determining whether to seek redemption or adhere to destructive impulses, rather than following a fixed narrative path. His individuation manifests through potent symbols such as the sunrise, the buck, and moral figures like Sister Calderon and Reverend Swanson, all possessing profound archetypal significance grounded in Jungian psychology. These elements construct a dynamic, interactive narrative aligning closely with Jung's concept of symbolic self-realization.

Earlier studies have applied Jungian archetypes to story-based games with set narratives, including *Persona 4* (Athalia, 2023) and *Alan Wake* (Garcia, 2022). Those games incorporate individuation within their frameworks: players progress through predetermined stages of maturation the game directs. Players are meant to observe or make minor adjustments to a pre-planned trajectory. *Red Dead Redemption 2* differs fundamentally. Arthur's individuation is not embedded in the plot; it is conditional. The game allows Arthur either to regress toward violence and egoism or progress toward moral clarity and harmony. Player actions determine his direction. This dynamic renders symbols and archetypes like the Wise Old Man, the Shadow, or the sunrise more than narrative elements; they also reflect player moral engagement with the character. The archetypal journey is not delivered to the player; instead, it is constructed in real time through interaction.

*Red Dead Redemption 2* has received extensive media and public attention, but scholarly research remains limited, particularly from a Jungian literary perspective. This study addresses that gap by examining one of the game's most emotionally significant and archetypally rich moments: the mission titled *The Fine Art of Conversation*. Arthur encounters either Sister Calderon or Reverend Swanson in this scene, which varies according to his honor level. Both characters are moral and spiritual figures representing different aspects of Arthur's psychological state. These interactions reflect Arthur's inner conflict and mark a turning point in his individuation journey. The symbols, archetypes, and emotional weight in this mission clarify Arthur's transformation, and the scene provides a unique opportunity to examine Jungian concepts in a branching, player-driven narrative.

The primary focus of this study is Arthur Morgan's individuation, demonstrated in the "I'm Afraid" scenario from *The Fine Art of Conversation*. This scene was selected because it contains rich symbolism and clearly demonstrates Jungian archetypes such as spiritual advisers, moral crossroads, and mortality. This scenario constitutes a key turning point in Arthur's character arc, where his honor path, shaped by player moral decisions, becomes evident. As demonstrated by previous survey data collected by the author in past studies, its emotional weight and psychological depth have consistently distinguished it from other game segments. The methodology section provides additional detail about that data, but the point here is that it supports focusing this study on a scene that best demonstrates Arthur's moral awakening and symbolic transformation.

To advance this investigation, the study is guided by two core research questions: (1) What archetypes and symbols emerge in Arthur Morgan's individuation encounter with Sister Calderon and Reverend Swanson during *The Fine Art of Conversation* mission? and (2) How does *Red Dead Redemption 2* expand the boundaries of modern literature? These questions reflect the research's two main objectives: first, to interpret the selected scene using Jungian psychology by identifying archetypal roles and symbolic elements at work; and second, to consider how the game's structure, with its moral branching, emotional responsiveness, and interactivity, positions it as a potent illustration of literary evolution. This study contends that *Red Dead Redemption 2* transcends ordinary storytelling; it creates an environment wherein players actively engage in constructing meaning, morality, and identity. The game illustrates how contemporary literature may flourish through interactive technology, presenting a novel domain where storytelling is not merely read or observed, but experienced.

## METHOD

The author obtained data for this study from an earlier undergraduate thesis containing a quantitative survey distributed to *Red Dead Redemption 2* players. Using a scale from 1 to 10, the study asked respondents to evaluate how emotionally powerful different key scenes in the game were. The "I'm Afraid" moment in *The Fine Art of Conversation* mission was the scene that most respondents identified as emotionally impactful. This sequence, which has two versions with either Sister Calderon or Reverend Swanson depending on player honor level, was the most frequently mentioned moment of moral contemplation and emotional impact. The survey was previously established and validated as part of prior academic research, providing a reliable foundation for focusing this study on a specific scene that best demonstrates the individuation process in interactive narrative.

The study employs Carl Jung's psychoanalytic theory, particularly his concepts of archetypes and the individuation process, to examine this scene. The study analyzes how significant symbols and archetypal figures appear in Arthur's interactions with Sister Calderon or Reverend Swanson using a literary-psychological framework. **Braun and Clarke's (2006)** thematic analysis method was used to identify the most important archetypal motifs and symbolic structures in the scene. Jungian theory guides analysis of these patterns to determine how the game not only depicts but also enables players to experience individuation through its interactive narrative. This establishes the game as an exemplary case for studying archetype-driven, player-shaped literary experiences.

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This section examines how the mission *The Fine Art of Conversation* in *Red Dead Redemption 2* demonstrates Arthur Morgan's psychological growth through archetypes and symbols. It also explores how the game's interactive design constitutes a form of modern literature. Carl Jung's theories on archetypes and individuation, as well as concepts from literary studies about contemporary narrative forms, guide the analysis. The first portion examines important characters and symbols in Arthur's conversation with either Sister Calderon or Reverend Swanson to discuss the scene's archetypal significance. The second portion addresses how *Red Dead Redemption 2* possesses qualities of modern literature and employs narrative techniques distinct from traditional literary forms.

### Archetypes and Symbols in *The Fine Art of Conversation* Mission



Figure 1. "I'm Afraid" High Honor Reverend Swanson



Figure 2. "I'm Afraid" High Honor Sister Calderon

This portion of the study examines the "I'm Afraid" moment, which constitutes the emotional apex of the mission *The Fine Art of Conversation*. Arthur Morgan departs from Captain Monroe and encounters either Sister Calderon or Reverend Swanson, depending on his honor level. It represents one of the clearest examples of Arthur's internal transformation and constitutes an important component of his individuation journey. The scene serves as a contemplative turning point demonstrating the game's moral and psychological depth through symbolic discourse and the presence of archetypal figures guiding players. The following sections examine the main archetypes and symbols emerging from this moment and how they contribute to shaping Arthur's evolving identity.



## Escaping (Escapism)



Figure 3. The First Word from The Scene

At the beginning of this scene, Arthur's struggle with escapism is illuminated. This struggle mirrors his role in assisting Captain Monroe's escape, which reflects his own desire to escape uncomfortable reality. When the cutscene begins, Arthur's first words are "Get out of here," immediately foreshadowing the escapism theme explored subsequently in the narrative. These lines, expressing Arthur's deep-seated longing to escape his own reality, establish the tone for the entire sequence and serve as its catalyst. Although Arthur addresses Monroe, he also addresses himself, expressing his desire to release the responsibilities of his past, his disease, and the identity he has constructed. In assisting Monroe's escape, Arthur attempts to experience the freedom he desires for himself, though freedom remains elusive. Beyond his motivation to help Monroe escape, Arthur harbors a strong yearning for freedom: freedom from past transgressions, freedom from gang demands, and freedom from his fatal disease. Although he assists Monroe, he cannot truly escape because the burden of his condition and past continues pursuing him. This contrast highlights Arthur's internal conflict; he strongly desires to move away from his outlaw identity, but his actions demonstrate difficulty truly breaking free. Just as Monroe flees seeking safety, Arthur cannot fully escape his past because he remains trapped in his internal battle. Despite his desire to escape suffering, Arthur cannot do so. His desire to help Monroe, reflecting a profound need for independence, remains unfulfilled in his case, rendering escapism vitally significant at this moment.

## Shadow Confrontation (Acknowledging Sin)



Figure 4. Arthur Confession to Sister Calderon

Arthur's conversation with Sister Calderon in this scene demonstrates how he copes with the burden of his misdeeds and the difficulty accepting them as unavoidable aspects of his past. Arthur's admission to Sister Calderon that "I've lived a bad life" demonstrates the humiliation he experiences. He struggles accepting that his past actions, despite being wrong, must be acknowledged as part of his journey. Sister Calderon's response, "We all lived a bad life," demonstrates that sin is something every individual experience and that individuals are capable

of forgiveness if they acknowledge their sinful acts. Arthur's conversation with Sister Calderon brings him closer to understanding the truth about his wrongdoings. Sister's compassionate words enable Arthur to overcome guilt and realize that salvation is available to everyone, including those who have committed considerable sin. From the beginning of his journey toward self-discovery, Arthur has progressed significantly, and this represents a major achievement. He begins understanding that accepting his shortcomings constitutes an essential component of maturing into a whole individual.

### **Breaking Persona (The Outlaw Mask)**



Figure 5. Arthur Rejecting His True Self

Arthur confronts his vulnerabilities and acknowledges a side of himself he had long hidden through conversation with Sister Calderon. This conversation represents the inner conflict he experiences between his persona and his true self. When Arthur says, "You don't know me," he demonstrates the tough, resolute criminal persona he has presented to society. This attitude is challenged by Sister Calderon, who responds: "Forgive me, but that's the problem. You don't know you." This compels Arthur to confront the fact that acts of love and compassion he has repressed ultimately define his personality, rather than the image he has created. The intensity of Arthur's internal conflict is revealed through his refusal to admit possessing a compassionate disposition. His mindset, developed over years as an outlaw, prevents him from embracing the goodness within him. Through Sister Calderon's words, Arthur sees past this facade and realizes his capacity for compassion truly defines who he is. After hearing Sister Calderon, Arthur's life takes a significant turn. This signals his realization that his actual identity is formed by present choices rather than past ones; thus, accepting the past according to Jung's concept of individuation assists in integrating conscious and unconscious selves.

### **Symbolic Setting (The Train Station)**



Figure 6. The Train Station Setting

During this moment, the train station serves as a metaphor for both departure and arrival, symbolizing life's cyclical aspect as well as Arthur's transformative journey. The train station signifies not only Captain Monroe's (or Sister Calderon's) departure, but also the beginning of

a new phase in Arthur's life. The station's cyclical aspect, wherein arrivals and departures are inevitable, symbolizes the gang's decline as well as Arthur's arduous path toward self-acceptance. While it symbolizes the beginning of Arthur's redemption, it also signals one chapter's conclusion. The train station scenario illustrates parallels between Arthur's tragic future circumstances and the gang's rule ending. Arthur must depart from his past, just as the train departs. However, it also represents an arrival: a sudden flash of understanding and transformation wherein Arthur begins glimpsing what lies ahead. Arthur experiences a turning point at this station. It is not only a departure site, but also a symbolic arrival point in his redemption quest. It represents life's cyclical nature and the certainty of moving forward.

### **Spiritual Guidance (Mentor Archetypes)**



Figure 7. Sister Calderon



Figure 8. Reverend Swanson

To illustrate the mentor or guide concept, Reverend Swanson and Sister Calderon are depicted as religious individuals providing assistance to Arthur in his salvation pursuit. Significant spiritual and religious symbolism is incorporated into character development in *Red Dead Redemption 2*, particularly through Reverend Swanson and Sister Calderon. These spiritual mentors represent divine guidance, directing Arthur toward self-discovery, redemption, and authentic self-acceptance. Their roles as spiritual figures connect to Jung's concept of spiritual figures in the individuation process, wherein individuals must confront their shadows and reconcile with their inner selves. In this scene, Arthur's interactions with Reverend Swanson and Sister Calderon indicate moments of spiritual insight. Jung frequently discussed spiritual figures' significance in individuation, and this scene exemplifies this. Sister Calderon's comforting words and Reverend Swanson's confession of his own failings provide Arthur with a model for confronting his guilt and finding redemption, comparable to Jung's perspective on self-confrontation as an essential component of psychological development. Jung himself stated that he did not need to believe in God because he knew: "I do not need to believe, I know." There is a crucial connection between self-realization's core theme and Reverend Swanson and Sister Calderon's roles as prominent spiritual figures. They equip Arthur with resources necessary to confront his past and embark on the healing process, directing him toward individuation's ultimate goal.



### **Moral Honesty ("I'm Afraid" and "I'm Changed")**



Figure 9. Arthur "I'm Afraid" Moment



Figure 10. Reverend "I'm Changed" Moment

Arthur's struggles with honesty are evident in his discussions with Sister Calderon and Reverend Swanson, whose divergent perspectives on openness and vulnerability illustrate self-acceptance processes. During conversation with Sister Calderon, Arthur states, "I'm afraid." This transcends mere fear of dying; it involves being open and confronting his fear of change. He is forthright about his fear of confronting his true self, including his shortcomings, his desire for change, and his struggle to be "good." In conversation with Sister Calderon, Arthur discusses his emotional turmoil, revealing his fear of discovering his true identity. Arthur finally acknowledges that change is frightening but essential for development, making this a significant moment. In contrast, Arthur and Reverend Swanson engage in entirely different discourse. While Reverend Swanson's unique approach encourages Arthur toward greater self-awareness, Sister Calderon helps him feel comfortable enough to discuss his concerns. Beyond acknowledging his own shortcomings, Reverend's response, "I'm changed," subtly advises Arthur to accept that he cannot perceive the extent of his own transformation and his surroundings'. Arthur considers self-honesty in light of Reverend's candor regarding his own redemption. Arthur struggles with this vulnerability level because he remains loyal to the gang and does not want to show weakness before fellow criminals. Although he resists acknowledging it, Arthur is forced to consider how he has not truly accepted that he has changed as a result of Reverend's confession.

The conflict between Arthur's change desire and his gang loyalty appears in his hesitancy to tell Reverend Swanson the truth. Arthur's unwillingness to relinquish his imposing persona contrasts sharply with the Reverend's candor regarding his moral transformation. This relationship is extremely important because Arthur is reluctant to relinquish the identity he has developed since childhood. Reverend's statement, "I'm changed," causes Arthur to reflect on his own inner turmoil and helps him see that genuine change requires truthfulness with both himself and the society he inhabits. Another illustration of the opposite side of Arthur's acceptance occurs when he chose to maintain his tough exterior by allowing Reverend to leave the group despite his refusal to confront him about his fear. This demonstrates how Arthur's

emotional development conflicts with barriers he has erected both physically and mentally over years. Sister Calderon allows Arthur to express his fear, but Reverend Swanson's subdued yet impactful confession forces Arthur to recognize that self-awareness constitutes an essential step on the path to self-realization. Arthur's fear of change is addressed in both exchanges, but differently: once with compassionate encouragement, and again through contemplation of Arthur's own shortcomings and lost opportunities for candor.

### **A Happy Farewell**



Figure 11. Sister Calderon Leaving

The contrast between his anguish and Sister Calderon's joyful farewell wave demonstrates Arthur's emotional development during their final conversation. Arthur's gloomy and somber tone contrasts starkly with Sister Calderon's cheerful "Goodbye!" Despite Arthur continuing to experience humiliation and grief, Sister Calderon's tone is clear and uninhibited, indicating she has accepted both her fate and the life she has led. The disparity highlights that Arthur struggles accepting the consequences of his actions, while Sister Calderon has already fulfilled her obligation to accept what her life offers. Sister Calderon's joyous "Goodbye!" reflects her own journey toward self-acceptance; it contains no trace of shame or regret. In Arthur's mind, this parting represents the moment when he must reconcile with his past to arrive at inner peace. This final farewell emphasizes *Red Dead Redemption 2's* core message: acceptance is the path to peace. While Sister Calderon has reached this point, Arthur's journey remains one of self-discovery and redemption. This moment serves as a reminder of how much further he must travel before he can truly accept his own past and move forward with his life.

### ***Red Dead Redemption 2* as a Modern Literary Form**

The second section examines how *Red Dead Redemption 2* constitutes a form of modern literature transcending traditional storytelling by incorporating interactive narrative components. Classic literature possesses set narratives and character arcs, but this game allows players to help write the main character's story through choices. Player morals, empathy, and reflection form these choices, affecting not only the narrative but also the psychological depth of the experience itself. This portion examines how interaction, moral involvement, and character development interconnect in *Red Dead Redemption 2*. It then argues that the game represents a genuine and dynamic form of literary expression in the 21st century. The following subsections discuss various aspects making the game an exemplary instance of modern literary storytelling.

Players can actively develop their own narratives in *Red Dead Redemption 2*, which traditional literature cannot accomplish. This gives the game's interactive narrative a new level of literary complexity. In conventional literature, readers engage passively with a predetermined narrative presenting them only the opportunity to observe events and characters. However, players in *Red Dead Redemption 2* actively contribute to narrative progression. Their

decisions affect not only outcomes, but also the transformation of the character they portray. This dynamic narrative framework allows production of emotional depth and moral complexity through a unique participatory technique. Because it enables Arthur's actions to be guided and players observe direct implications of their choices, *Red Dead Redemption 2* stands out as more contemporary and significant than traditional writing forms. The game's honor-morality system demonstrates this participatory approach. In this mechanism, Arthur's decisions affect not only his honor but also his relationships with other characters. Players can impact both their game environment interactions and character conduct by making choices regarding whether to use violence or compassion. Player choices interact with story development, enabling them to shape their experience on a much more intimate level. This contrasts with the passive reader approach typical of conventional literature. Player roles are actively shaped in *Red Dead Redemption 2*, transforming them from merely observers to creators of their own narrative journey. This enables players to experience a creative form of literary involvement difficult to achieve through fixed narrative experiences in conventional literary genres.

In contrast to traditional literature, *Red Dead Redemption 2* employs archetypes and symbols as a crucial mechanism enabling players to experience their moral and emotional character evolution in real time. *Red Dead Redemption 2* employs deep Jungian archetypes, such as the Hero, the Shadow, and the Mentor, alongside symbols such as the buck and the sunrise, to immerse players in a narrative requiring active participation, as discussed in the preceding section. Players of *Red Dead Redemption 2* experience Arthur's journey firsthand, making choices directly impacting his emotional and moral development. This contrasts with traditional literature reading methods, wherein readers merely witness a character's journey. One of the most distinctive interactive storytelling approaches is created by the mechanism providing direct feedback between player actions and narrative progression. The game does more than merely exhibit these concepts, despite Arthur's archetype as the Hero and his struggle with his Shadow resembling traditional literary themes of psychological development. These archetypes come alive in a manner paralleling the growing self-awareness of the player through player decisions. The game constitutes an immersive experience substantially involving players in real-time moral introspection. This occurs because symbols, such as the sunrise, the buck, and the mountain, serve as visual and thematic reflections of this inner metamorphosis.

The findings of this study align with and extend previous research on Jungian archetypes in video game narratives. Garcia (2022) applied Jung's individuation theory to analyze *Alan Wake* (2010), identifying archetypal patterns within the game's psychological horror narrative. Similarly, Athalia (2023) examined how characters in *Persona 4* manifest Carl Jung's archetypes, focusing on the game's explicit use of Jungian psychology in character design and narrative structure. Both studies demonstrate that video games can effectively incorporate archetypal frameworks to create psychologically rich narratives. However, this research extends beyond those analyses by demonstrating how *Red Dead Redemption 2*'s conditional individuation system, driven by player moral choices rather than predetermined narrative arcs, creates a fundamentally different archetypal experience. While *Persona 4* and *Alan Wake* guide players through fixed stages of psychological development, *Red Dead Redemption 2* allows players to actively construct or deconstruct Arthur's individuation journey through gameplay decisions.

Furthermore, Tavares et al. (2021) examined self-reflection in games through the individuation process in *Celeste* and *Persona 2: Innocent Sin*, arguing that games can represent psychological transformation through symbolic gameplay mechanics. This study confirms their findings that video games constitute legitimate sites for exploring Jungian concepts, while

adding that the emotional impact of archetypal moments, as evidenced by player survey data prioritizing the "I'm Afraid" scene, demonstrates that interactive media can achieve affective depth comparable to traditional literature. Additionally, Wright and Denisova (2024) found that moral decision-making mechanics in video games create genuine ethical engagement extending beyond gameplay. This research supports their conclusion by demonstrating that Arthur's encounters with spiritual mentor figures like Sister Calderon and Reverend Swanson facilitate authentic moral contemplation shaped by player choices, thereby validating video games as capable of producing literary experiences with real psychological and ethical dimensions.

## CONCLUSION

The study finds that *Red Dead Redemption 2* represents a significant development in how individuals can engage with and understand literature in the 21st century. The game presents narrative in a novel way by employing archetypal architecture, symbolic locations, and a player-guided storyline. The mission *The Fine Art of Conversation*, especially the "I'm Afraid" moment, demonstrates a key turning point in Arthur Morgan's individuation process. It constitutes an emotionally and morally charged scene demonstrating how Jungian concepts like the Hero, the Shadow, the Persona, and the Mentor can affect the psyche. These archetypes are not merely narrative components; they are activated by player choices, meaning that player moral decisions can alter Arthur's path to self-realization.

What distinguishes *Red Dead Redemption 2* is that it makes readers feel part of the story. In traditional fiction, audiences passively observe character arcs. In this game, however, spectators must be morally and emotionally involved. Player choices produce consequences affecting Arthur's growth, his relationships, his worldview, and the story's conclusion. This transforms the game into more than merely a storytelling medium; it becomes a shared journey where the literary experience is deeply personal and psychologically engaging.

Ultimately, *Red Dead Redemption 2* should be recognized as a modern literary work addressing timeless themes like guilt, redemption, and self-discovery, accomplishing this through methods that amplify their power. The game exemplifies a new kind of literary narrative that is introspective, collaborative, and grounded in both psychological theory and artistic design. It allows players to engage with moral issues, symbolic patterns, and emotional effects in real time. It is not merely a game; it is a literary world allowing readers to live the novel as they experience it.

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